

THEATRE / AUSTRALIA

Trent Dalton's Love Stories

Adapted for the stage by Tim McGarry
With additional writing and story by Trent Dalton
And Fiona Franzmann
Directed by Sam Strong

Dates: Wed 12 Mar – Sun 16 Mar
Venue: Dunstan Playhouse
Duration: 1hr 40mins, no interval

Trent Dalton's *Love Stories* was originally commissioned and produced by Brisbane Festival and QPAC for Brisbane Festival 2024. The presentation of *Love Stories* has been made possible by the Adelaide Festival Contemporary. Presenting Partner: Channel 7

Credits

CREATIVES

Author **Trent Dalton**
Adaptor **Tim McGarry**
Director/Dramaturg **Sam Strong**
Additional Writer **Fiona Franzmann**
Associate Director & Ensemble Member **Ngoc Phan**
Choreographer & Movement Director **Nerida Matthaai**
Composer & Sound Designer **Stephen Francis**
Lighting Designer **Ben Hughes**
Set & Costume Designer **Renee Mulder**
Video Design & Cinematographer **Craig Wilkinson**
Intimacy Coordination **Nerida Matthaai** and **Michala Banas**

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Brisbane Festival Executive Producer **Melinda Collie Holmes**
QPAC Senior Producer **Thomas Pritchard**
QPAC Production Manager **Jason Organ**
Voice & Dialect Coach **Gabrielle Rogers**
Singing Coach **Megan Shorey**
Costume Realiser **Kasey Turner**
Video Design Assistant **Lani Dwyer**
Lighting Programmer **Tom Broadhurst**

CREW

Tour Producer **Natasha Phillips**
Company Production Manager **Pip Loth**
Stage Manager **Lucy Kelland**
Assistant Stage Manager **Briana Clark**
Sound Operator **Israel Leslie**
Video Systems Technician **Joshua Braithwaite**

CAST

Jean-Benoit **Rashidi Edward**
Husband **Jason Klarwein**
Wife **Michala Banas**
Ensemble **Patrick Jhanur**
Ensemble **Angie Milliken**
Ensemble **Kirk Page**
Ensemble **Bryan Probets**
Ensemble **Jacob Watton**
Ensemble **Hsin-Ju Ely**
Camera Operator **Tnee Dyer**

Production shots by **David Kelly**

From the Author Trent Dalton

Can you tell me a love story? That's where it began for me. It always begins with a question. This heaving and mysterious blue world of ours was built on questions. Where did we come from? Where are we going? And, of course, that delicious and eternal three-word brain twister that we were fated to ponder along the way: What is love?

This raw and real and wondrous stage play that you are about to experience began as a book I wrote after sitting for two months on the corner of Adelaide and Albert Streets, Brisbane, with a sky-blue Olivetti Studio 44 typewriter – bequeathed to me by an earthbound suburban angel who died on Christmas Day, 2020 – asking 150 strangers to tell me their deepest and most cherished love stories. I had two small chairs, a small writing desk and a big sign: "Sentimental writer collecting love stories. Do you have one to share?" Quite possibly the most fulfilling and inspiring journalistic endeavour of my life.

Can you tell me a love story? That's a simple and safe question and that corner of Adelaide and Albert Street became, to my surprise, an incredibly safe space in which complete strangers could sit and attempt to answer that question in the best way they knew how. I've spent 24 years as a working journalist searching for the perfect ice breaker. Love, I soon realised on that corner, is one hell of an ice pick. Love is a universal access point to the soul. Get any earthling from anywhere on earth talking about what they love then you will get them talking deeply about their life. Because love is life. To tell a love story is to tell a story of your life. Maybe the defining story. And all of life can be found in that story. Pain. Glory. Rage. Regret. Sorrow. Passion. Joy. Wonder. Meaning. Love. Life. The strangers on the corner talked and I listened and then I asked questions that I thought might keep them talking. Question and answer. Question and answer. That sacred and eternal transaction.

I never could have anticipated the number of beautiful and tragic love stories swirling around that corner on the edge of King George Square, beneath the shadow of our beloved Brisbane City Hall clocktower. Nor the deep and profound connections readers would eventually have to these stories.

It's these real-life stories from real-life Australians that director Sam Strong and playwright Tim McGarry – and the most extraordinarily gifted theatrical team of actors and creatives – have so carefully and so spectacularly brought to the stage. Much of the dialogue you will hear in the theatre has been taken verbatim from the extraordinary storytellers who stopped by my typewriter. The human emotions threading through each story are every bit the emotions I felt on that corner when I'd find myself standing in the middle of the city, hugging a stranger, weeping with a stranger whom I'd only known for half-an-hour, but whom I was connected to instantly by the power of storytelling. To the brilliant and brave real-life storytellers who represent the narrative heart and soul of this play, we say thank you from the bottom of our full and grateful hearts. Thanks to Sam and Tim for allowing me the honour of working with Fiona Franzmann – lead character in the love story of my life – to create several scenes inspired and often amplified by our own real-life marriage that form the narrative spine of this play. Thanks to our beloved Brisbane Festival and the Queensland Performing Arts Centre. And thank you, dear theatregoer, most of all. For you are now a part of a beautiful and ongoing love story. All you need is love. All we need is you.

Director's Note Sam Strong

On one level, translating a book to the stage is simple. Your most important job is to channel the spirit of the original. In this case, there are multiple sources to capture. There are the stories (and often literal words) of the people who had the courage to share their experiences with Trent Dalton. Then there is the open-hearted curiosity of Trent himself, a super-sized journalist's empathy that encouraged such candour in his subjects. Then, there is the beautiful

act of generosity and insight that was Kath Kelly's gift of her beloved Studio 44 Olivetti typewriter.

On another level, translating a book to the stage is extraordinarily complex. Reading a non-linear collection of non-fiction stories (even in one sitting) is a very different experience to watching a show play out in three dimensions over 100 minutes. We need to be both extremely faithful to the source material, and extremely bold in bringing it to life in a way that only the theatre can.

Fortunately, we have an incredible team who have embraced this challenge. While it's a very different show, we have deliberately reunited the entire creative team (and even some of the cast) behind the record-breaking adaptation of *Boy Swallows Universe*. This creates its own love story – the shorthand and intimacy born of previous collaboration (as well as that born of a husband and wife as co-writers).

Trent's body of work has a knack of making the specific universal. He might have been talking to people on a Brisbane street corner, but these experiences could happen anywhere, and they speak to everywhere. I think this stems in part from the verbatim authenticity of the real people's experiences at the heart of *Love Stories*. But I suspect it is also about the license that Trent gives us to feel.

It is a rare gift to create something so unashamedly sentimental and free of cynicism. But if we needed this injection of joy – and a reminder of how we can all love better – when the stories were captured in 2021, we need it even more now.

With love

Sam

From the Adaptor Tim McGarry

One of the great gifts of working in the arts is the opportunity to work alongside creative souls who inspire you; people you deeply admire and respect. 'Bringing back the band' with Sam and Trent, and the extraordinary creative team from *Boy Swallows Universe*, then adding the astoundingly talented Fiona Franzmann into the process, has made this three-year journey a creative dream.

Our writing task, one provocation – what is love? Love flourishes in many guises. It brings hope, joy, beauty. Love brings heartache, grief, pain. Love is inescapable. It sits in our very souls, in our memories. And yet do I truly understand it? Honestly, no. Its meaning, its consequence, more elusive and more mysterious than ever. But nevertheless, we set upon a quest to create a new work exploring love.

Making theatre can be life affirming. When collaborating with like-minded peeps, whom you grow to respect and admire more with every interaction, I'm reminded of how remarkably rewarding a creative life can be. There is a deep joy in the collaborative practice of theatre. Creating a new work takes time. As co-writers we spend enormous amounts of time together musing, sharing ideas, feelings, experiences. Literally thousands of emails, phone calls, zooms, text messages go back and forth, getting each word, each sentence, each scene just right. It takes patience, listening and respect. It can be all-absorbing, stimulating, inspiring, discombobulating, joyous, and every emotion in-between – that's collaborative theatre-making. Like love, it's a little elusive in its explanation, but the exhilaration felt when we all muse over the latest draft and feel – we are almost there, is euphoric!

I pay tribute to the kind, charismatic, enthusiastic, positive, fun-loving soul – Trent Dalton. Trent's talent, his tenacity, his passion, but mostly, his deep care in listening to, and allowing ordinary Australians to share their extraordinary lives and loves, is what makes this theatre work possible. Without Trent's *Love Stories* we wouldn't be sitting in this theatre, waiting for the curtain to rise. Trent and Fiona – the time, the care and tenderness in baring your lives, your hearts –

from the bottom of my heart, my deepest gratitude. It was an honour being your confidante. I thank you for your trust and faith, diving into this extraordinary process with such enthusiasm and love.

I pay tribute to the incredible Sam Strong. I'm often asked – what's a dramaturg? My go to analogy, 'they're a bit like a car mechanic, they don't build the car, but they know intricately how it works, and can make it run, faster, smoother, better.' Sam, our dramaturg, was all of this and much more. From the very beginning he nurtured, encouraged, counselled, and the gently coached us through every word, every line, every moment. My gratitude and joy working alongside Sam Strong is boundless. His artistry and vision have my endless admiration and respect.

But creating a new work goes way beyond the script. It takes a village... Ben, Craig, Neri, Ng .oc, Renée, Steve and the entire creative team, Jason, Jacinta, Lucy and the stage management crew, all the actors who contributed to the workshops and this production, Louise, Charlie and all at Brisbane Festival (special mention to Min!) John Kotzas and all at QPAC – your dedication, your passion and mighty contribution to LOVE STORIES is beyond inspiring.

Today, we proudly gift you our play, and as the curtain falls and we leave the theatre, may we all reflect and celebrate the many loves that make up our precious life.

Creatives

Trent Dalton Author

Trent Dalton's books have sold more than 1.5 million copies around the world. He is the author of *Boy Swallows Universe* (HarperCollins, 2018), the critically acclaimed international and national bestseller, winner of the 2019 Indie Book of the Year Award, the MUD Literary Prize, the UTS Glenda Adams Award for New Writing and the People's Choice Award at the 2019 NSW Premier's Literary Awards. At the 2019 Australian Book Industry Awards, the book won a record four awards, including the prestigious Book of the Year Award. *Boy Swallows Universe* has been published across thirty-four territories throughout the world and was recently adapted into a seven-part Netflix limited series which became the most watched Netflix show in Australia within three days of release and broke Top 10 lists in 75 countries across the world. The series swept the 2024 Logie Awards, winning five awards, including Best Mini-Series. The 2021 stage adaptation of *Boy Swallows Universe* smashed box office records to become the Queensland Performing Arts Centre's highest-selling drama ever and Queensland Theatre's best-selling show in its entire history. Dalton's second novel, *All Our Shimmering Skies* (HarperCollins, 2020) was a #1 national bestseller and was optioned for development by Apple TV. His latest non-fiction book, *Love Stories* (HarperCollins 2021), was a #1 Australian bestseller and won the Indie Book Awards Book of the Year 2022. Dalton's most recent fiction novel, 2023's *Lola In The Mirror*, became an instant #1 bestseller and was named Literary Fiction Book of the Year at the 2024 Australian Book Industry Awards. Trent is a two-time winner of a Walkley Award for Excellence in Journalism, a four-time winner of a Kennedy Award for Excellence in NSW Journalism and a four-time winner of the national News Awards Features Journalist of the Year. He's also the proud official ambassador of Third Space, a day-time drop-in centre where people experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Brisbane have found support, dignity and hope for the past 50 years. He lives in Brisbane with his wife and two daughters.

Sam Strong Director/Dramaturg

Sam Strong is an award-winning theatre and opera director and cultural leader. He has held leadership positions in three states including Executive Director of Creative Industries at Creative Victoria, Artistic Director of Queensland Theatre and Griffin Theatre Company, Chair of Melbourne Fringe and Circa, Associate Artistic Director at Melbourne Theatre Company and Literary Associate at Belvoir. As a director, Sam has created productions for all Australian State Theatre Companies, Belvoir, Griffin, and the Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane Festivals. Directing credits include: For

Brisbane Festival/QPAC/Queensland Theatre: *Boy Swallows Universe*; For Queensland Theatre: *Emerald City, Storm Boy, Hydra, Nearer The Gods, Twelfth Night, Noises Off, Once In Royal David's City*; For Victorian Opera: *Cassandra/Echo and Narcissus*; For Melbourne Theatre Company: *Jasper Jones, Double Indemnity, The Weir, Endgame, The Sublime, The Speechmaker, Private Lives, The Crucible, Other Desert Cities, Madagascar*; For Sydney Theatre Company: *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*; For Sydney Festival/Griffin: *The Boys*; For Sydney Festival/Griffin/STCSA/Melbourne Festival: *Masquerade*; For Griffin: *The Floating World, Between Two Waves, And No More Shall We Part, Speaking In Tongues*; For Company B Belvoir: *The Power Of Yes*; For Red Stitch Actors' Theatre: *Red Sky Morning, Faces In The Crowd*. Sam has won Best Direction of a Mainstage Production at the Sydney Theatre Awards (*The Floating World*) and has been and nominated for Greenroom Awards, Helpmann Awards and Sydney Theatre Awards for numerous productions including *Once In Royal David's City, Jasper Jones, The Power Of Yes, The Sublime* and *The Boys*. He is one of only two directors in the history of the Helpmann Awards to have two productions nominated for best play in the one year.

Tim McGarry Adaptor

Passionate about interrogating and developing new Australian work, Tim trained in theatre at WAAPA and works as a writer, actor and director. His writing credits include – for Queensland Theatre Trent Dalton's *Boy Swallows Universe*, Christine Dunstan Productions Colleen McCullough's *Tim*, ACO *There's A Sea In My Bedroom*, SOH *Music For The Dreaming, The Nutcracker, Swing Baby Swing*, Monkey Baa *Thursday's Child, Hitler's Daughter, I Am Jack, Goodbye Jamie Boyd, The Peasant Prince, True Story Of Mao's Last Dancer*, Sydney Symphony *Who Needs A Conductor Anyway*. Between 2005-2017 Tim was a Creative Director of Monkey Baa Theatre Company, one of Australia's largest touring companies for young audiences, where he co-wrote over 20 new Australian works, touring nationally and internationally, receiving multiple Helpmann, Glug, and Sydney Theatre awards. His acting credits include for KXT *Tell Me Before The Sun Explodes, White Box Before The Meeting, The Campaign, Old Fitz The Shadow Box*, Sport for Jove *Cyrano De Bergerac*, Eternity Playhouse and Moira Blumenthal Productions *The God Of Isaac, You Will Not Play Wagner, My Name Is Asher Lev, Coming To See Aunt Sophie*, national tour of TML Management's *It's A Dad Thing*, O'Punsky's *The Carthaginians*, Crossroads A *Respectable Wedding*, Theatre South *The Male Line, Time Gentlemen, Macbeth, Italian Stories*, Kings Cross Theatre *The Suicide*, Company B Sharp *The Information RTC Bouncers*, Gordon Frost's *Big River The Musical*, WATC *The Sentimental Bloke*, Hole in the Wall *Snoopy The Musical*. For film and television Tim appeared in *Wellmania, Rake, All Saints, Home and Away, Underbelly-The Golden Mile, A More Fortunate Life, Hacksaw Ridge, Lillian's Story, Manny, Goddess Of 1967*. A proud member of the MEAA, Tim is currently under commission, creating a new work for Western Australia's Black Swan State Theatre Company.

Fiona Franzman Writer

Fiona has had a 30-year career as a writer and journalist, working on newspapers and magazines in Australia and the UK, and as an editor, speech writer and media adviser. Her love of theatre and the stage was ignited at the age of five when she and her sister won a local church talent quest singing and dancing to *Down Where The Watermelons Grow*. She has pursued this passion in various ways her whole life, including stints in a rock band, as a wedding singer, and in amateur dramatic and musical theatre productions. Creative writing has also been a mainstay of Fiona's life and in recent years she has worked with her husband, Trent Dalton, on co-writing and developing stories and projects across a range of mediums, including helping adapt Trent's non-fiction book *Love Stories* for this Brisbane world-premiere production. She sees her involvement as a beautiful combination of two of her great loves. Trent and Fiona's joint feature film screenplay *Home* is currently in development. It is a love story set on the streets of Brisbane.

Dr Nerida Matthaei Choreographer & Movement Director

Nerida Matthaai is an award-winning choreographer, performer and the Artistic Director of Phluxus2 Dance Collective. The underlying pulse of her work comes from an ingrained passion for contemporary choreographic practice as a beautifully planned anarchy of mind-body collaboration. Driven by challenging socio-political orthodoxy and breaking conventions through physical performance, she is a much sought-after collaborator across performance sectors internationally. She is extremely generous with her skills and time, not only collaborating and leading arts projects around the world, but investing in grassroots programs benefitting the local community. Nerida has a Doctor of Creative Industries (QUT) specialising in choreographic practice.

Nerida works with companies including Brisbane Festival, Polytoxic, Briefs Factory, The Good Room, The Crackup Sisters, Queensland Theatre, Red Leap Theatre, GOMA, The Royal Ballet and QPAC. She has collaborated with and worked alongside artists such as Trent Dalton, Dan Evans, Sam Strong, Leah Shelton, Wesley Enoch, Natalie Weir, Nathan Wright, and Lisa Fa'alafai. Her works for Phluxus2Dance Collective include *Angel Monster*, *Proximal*, *Don'ts for Dancers*, *Boiling Point*, *De-Generator*, *The Paratrooper Project*, *Mort*, *10* and the annual *The Independance Project*. Her work has been nominated and awarded numerous accolades nationally and internationally, most recently Best Dance Film at the New Wave Film Festival Munich for her work *Proximal*, and Best of the Fest 2022 and 2023 at Edinburgh Fringe Festival for *Angel Monster*.

Choreographic and performance highlights include stadium size multi-disciplinary *Leila* in Saudi Arabia and Italy for Balich Worldwide, William Forsythe's *Fact of Matter*, the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games Opening Ceremony, Nick Cave's *Heard*, the premiere stage adaptation of Trent Dalton's *Boy Swallows Universe*, *Bottari* with Sadari Movement Lab, Polytoxic's *Apocalypstick* and *Dangerous Goods*, Sir Michael Attenborough's *Macbeth*, and many works with The Good Room including *I've Been Meaning to Ask You*.

Nerida recently created solo work *10* for Metro Arts *Dance24* Festival and *Hota's* Underground Festival, showcased *Angel Monster* as guest choreographer at the Motion Mongolia Contemporary Dance Festival and Cairns Festival.

Ngoc Phan **Associate Director & Alternate Ensemble**

Ngoc is an award-winning actor, director and playwright.

Her directing credits include co-directing *Vietgone* at Queensland Theatre, as well as directing *Impending Everyone* and *DNA* for Queensland Theatre's Young Artists. She also directed the Brisbane Girls Grammar Senior production of *She Kills Monsters*.

On stage, Ngoc's performances include *Vietgone*, *Boy Swallows Universe*, and *Good Grief* at Queensland Theatre; *Laurinda* with the Melbourne Theatre Company; *Horizon* at Playlab Theatre; *Medea* with Shock Therapy Productions; and *Away*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *The Mathematics of Longing*, and *The Village* at La Boite Theatre. Her work also includes *What I'm Here For*, *The Motion of Light in Water*, and *After All This* with Elbow Room; *Dolores* for Anywhere Festival; *Splendour* with Now Look Here; *That's What She Said* with The Good Room; and *Stunt Double* with The Farm.

Her screen performances include *Audrey* (Invisible Republic); *Rock Island Mysteries* (Fremantle Media); *And the Ocean Agreed*, *Vietgone*, *Boy Swallows Universe*, and *Good Grief* at Queensland Theatre; *Laurinda* with the Melbourne Theatre Company; *Horizon* at Playlab Theatre; *Medea* with Shock Therapy Productions; and *Away*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *The Mathematics of Longing*, and *The Village* at La Boite Theatre. Her work also includes *What I'm Here For*, *The Motion of Light in Water*, and *After All This* with Elbow Room; *Dolores* for Anywhere Festival; *Splendour* with Now Look Here; *That's What She Said* with The Good Room; and *Stunt Double* with The Farm.

Her screen performances include *Audrey* (Invisible Republic); *Rock Island Mysteries* (Fremantle Media); *And the Ocean Agreed*. (Scout Films); *Kidnapped in Paradise* (Steve Jaggi/Sepia); *Tidelands* (Netflix)

Australia/Hoodlum); *Freudian Slip* (Broken Head Productions); *Australia Day* (Hoodlum/Foxtel); *Pawno* (Toothless Pictures); *Schapelle* (Fremantle Media); *At World's End* (New Holland Pictures); *Sea Patrol* (Nine Network); *Terra Nova* (Terra Nova Production); *Secrets and Lies* (Network Ten); and the AFI award-winning film *The Black Balloon*.

As a playwright, Ngoc participated in the Lotus Program supported by Playwriting Australia (PWA) and Contemporary Asian Australian Performance (CAAP). She was an Artist-in-Residence at La Boite Theatre, where she developed her play *My Father Who Slept In a Zoo* and had her writing featured in *The Village*. She was also a member of La Boite's Artist Company.

Ngoc won the Matilda Award for Best Performance in a Supporting Role in a Mainstage Production for her role in *Vietgone*.

Renée Mulder **Set & Costume Design**

Renée is an award-winning set and costume designer. Renée was Design Director at Queensland Theatre 2020-2021, a member of Queensland Theatre's National Artistic Team from 2016-2017 and Resident Designer at Sydney Theatre Company from 2012-2014.

Designs for theatre include: for Sydney Theatre Company; *Stolen*, *Julia*, *Grand Horizons*, *Triple X* (Queensland Theatre), *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, *Black is the New White*. Costume Designs: *The Seagull*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, *Playing Beatie Bow*. For Melbourne Theatre Company; *Is God Is*, *Home I'm Darling*, *Arbus & West*. For Griffin Theatre; *Dogged*, *Prima Facie*, *The Boys*. For Queensland Theatre; *Gaslight*, *Boy Swallows Universe*, *Return to the Dirt*, *Nearer the Gods*, *An Octoroon*. For La Boite; *As Your Like It*, *Ruben Guthrie*, *I Love Your Bro*.

Renée won Best Stage Design of a Mainstage Production and was nominated for Best Costume Design at the 2019 Sydney Theatre Awards for her work on *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*. Renée won the 2018 Sydney Theatre Award for Best Costume Design for *Top Girls* and was nominated in the same category for her designs for *Harp in the South*, both with Sydney Theatre Company. Renée received a nomination for Best Costume Design of a Mainstage Production in the 2023 Sydney Theatre Awards for her work on *The Importance of Being Earnest*. She also received a Helpmann Award nomination for Best Costume Design for *Harp in the South*. Renée won a Matilda Award for Best Design for *Edward Gant's Amazing Feats of Loneliness* (Sydney Theatre Company/La Boite).

Ben Hughes **Lighting Design**

Ben Hughes is an award-winning lighting designer for theatre, dance and opera. His designs have appeared on stages both throughout Australia, and internationally. He is Associate Artistic Director of The Danger Ensemble.

Credits include: for Brisbane Festival, *Love Stories*, *Bananaland*, *Salamander*; for Queensland Theatre, *The Almighty Sometimes*, *The Sunshine Club*, *Return to the Dirt*, *Boy Swallows Universe*, *Triple X* (with Sydney Theatre Company), *Mouthpiece*, *Antigone*, *L'Apartment*, *Twelfth Night*; for Sydney Theatre Company, *Poison of Polygamy*(with La Boite), *Black is the New White* (and national tour); for Melbourne Theatre Company, *37*; for QPAC, *Jersey Boys* (with Prospero Arts), *Is That You Ruthie?* (with Oombarra Productions), *Breaking the Castle*; for Opera Queensland, *Don Giovanni*, *Mozart Airborne* (with Expressions Dance Company and Natalie Weir); for La Boite, *IRL*, *The Last Five Years*, *Away*, *Naked and Screaming*, *The Neighbourhood*, *From Darkness*; for Prospero Arts, *Singing in the Rain*, *Wizard* ; for Meryl Tankard, *Two Feet* (Adelaide Festival and Hong Kong Arts Festival); for Australasian Dance Company, *Three 2.0*, *Forgery*, *Aftermath*, *The Dinner Party (The Host)*; for Queensland Ballet, *Bespoke*, *Strictly Gershwin*, *The Masters Series*, *Giselle*; for Dead Puppet Society, *Legs on the Wall*, Brisbane Festival and Sydney Festival, *Holding Achilles*.

Ben won the 2023 Matilda Award for Best Lighting Design for

Salamander, and has received Australian Production Design Guild Award nominations for *Medea*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Boy Swallows Universe*; and numerous Matilda Award nominations for Best Lighting Design including for *Boy Swallows Universe*, *L'Appartement*, *Switzerland*, *Good Muslim Boy*, *The Crucible*, *John Gabriel Borkman* and *Mother Courage and her Children* and for Best Set Design for *Caligula* (co-design).

Ben lectures in lighting design at Queensland University of Technology.

Craig Wilkinson **Video Design & Cinematographer**

Craig Wilkinson APDG is an award-winning Live Performance Video Designer and the Creative Director of optical bloc. His video design work has toured extensively across Australia and internationally to Hong Kong, UK, North America, Saudi Arabia and South Africa.

Video Design credits include: *Dracula* (Sydney Theatre Company), *Boy Swallows Universe* (Queensland Theatre / Brisbane Festival / QPAC), *Frankenstein*, *James and the Giant Peach*, *Fourthcoming*, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Green Day's American Idiot*, *Wuthering Heights*, *1984* (Shake & Stir Theatre Company), *Grease the Musical* – 2024/2025 national tour (John Frost for Crossroads Live), *Shaun the Sheep's Circus Show* (CiRCA / Aardman Animation), *Dein Perry's Tap Dogs* (Broadway Entertainment Group), *First Casualty*, *The Mountaintop*, *Gasp!* (Queensland Theatre), *Cinderella*, *The Little Mermaid*, *My Brilliant Career* (Queensland Ballet), *Jersey Boys*, *The Wizard of Oz – In Concert*, *Singin' in the Rain – In Concert* (Prospero Arts / QPAC), *Cruel Intentions: The 90's Musical* (David Venn Enterprises), *The Mystery of Valkyrie* (Woodward Productions), *Avoidable Perils* (Counterpilot), *Let's Be Friends Forever*, *I've Been Meaning to Ask You* (The Good Room / Brisbane Festival), *Prize Fighter*, *Pale Blue Dot* (La Boite Theatre), *One The Bear* (Black Honey Company / La Boite / Campbelltown Arts Centre), *Snapshot* (Polytoxic), *Frank & Fearless*, *The Night Parrot*, *Help is on it's Way*, *Voices of Remembrance*, *One Hundred and One Years* (Queensland Music Festival), *Seven Sisters Songline* (HHO Events for the Canberra Centenary), *Terror Australis* (Leah Shelton), *Viva Spectacular*, *Cyber Illusion Spectacular* (Aerial Angels Australia / Ocean Park Hong Kong).

As Australian and New Zealand Associate Video Designer: Jim Steinman's *Bat Out of Hell – The Musical* (TEG Dainty). As a video producer, Craig has created video marketing campaigns for companies such as Sydney Theatre Company, Queensland Theatre, Shake & Stir Theatre Company, La Boite Theatre and Brisbane Festival.

Stephen Francis **Composition & Sound Design**

As composer and/or sound designer for theatre Steve has worked for Australia's leading theatre companies. Recent productions include *Baleen Moondjan* (Adelaide Festival), *Julia*, *No Pay No Way* (Sydney Theatre Company), *The Weekend*, *Tell Me I'm Here* (Belvoir St Theatre), *Boy Swallows Universe* (Queensland Theatre). He has also been a composer and sound designer for Melbourne Theatre Company, Bell Shakespeare, SA State Theatre Company, Griffin Theatre, Sport for Jove and Legs on the Wall.

For dance, Steve is best known for his work with Australia's leading national indigenous company, Bangarra Dance Theatre. He has scored fourteen productions for the company over the last twenty years which have toured nationally and overseas, most recently *Horizon: The Light Inside*, *Wudjang Not the Past*, *Sandsong* and *Bennelong*.

Steve has also scored music for the recent feature films *The Moogai* and *Firestarter: The Story of Bangarra*. He has won two Helpmann Awards for Best Original Score (*Walkabout*, 2002 and *Belong*, 2011)

and also two for best new Australian work (*Walkabout*, 2002 and *Bennelong*, 2018). Steve has been nominated three times in the Helpmann sound design category and has two Sydney Theatre Awards for Music and Sound Design.

Cast

Jason Klarwein **Husband**

Jason Klarwein recently performed on stage in *Every Brilliant Thing* with That Production Company and on screen in the series *In Our Blood* and *Summer Love*, both for ABC.

Jason's television credits include the AACTA winning Foxtel series, *Devil's Playground*, ABC's Australia Remembers, Network Ten's *Cybergirl*, the final series of *Sea Patrol* on the Nine Network, and the FOX8 series, *Slide*. His feature film credits include Baz Luhrmann's *Elvis* and Ben Hackworth's *Celeste*.

Jason is a seasoned theatre performer and has appeared in many productions including *Emerald City* for MTC, *A Streetcar Named Desire* for STC, *Hedda*, *Twelfth Night*, *Once in Royal David's City*, *The Odd Couple*, *The Seagull*, *Macbeth* for Queensland Theatre, *Paul*, *Capricornia* for Belvoir and *Henry 4*, *Faustus* for Bell Shakespeare.

Jason has also directed several theatre productions including *Othello*, *Death of a Salesman*, *My Name is Jimi*, *St Mary's in Exile*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The 7 Stages of Grieving* and *Oedipus Doesn't Live Here Anymore* for Queensland Theatre. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Trial*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *The Zoo Story*, *April's Fool Redux*, *Hoods*, for *Grin & Tonic*, and *Cursed!* for Belvoir.

Jason was nominated for Best Actor in the 2017 Helpmann Awards for his performance in Michael Gow's *Once in Royal David's City*. He has received two Queensland Reconciliation Awards for *Othello* and *My Name is Jimi*. Jason is the current Artistic Director of *Grin & Tonic* and the Federal President of Equity, MEAA.

Rashidi Edward **Jean-Benoit**

Rashidi trained at the Adelaide College of the Arts. He performed in the State Theatre Company South Australia's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, a season that also included the Sydney Festival and Queensland Theatre. Other productions with the company include *Hibernation*, *A Doll's House*, *Macbeth*, *Sense & Sensibility*, *In The Club*. Additionally, he performed in Theatre Republic's *The Garden*, *Lines*, Adelaide Festival's *Allope* and Essential Theatre's *Romeo and Juliet*. Rashidi made his debut performance at Belvoir undertaking their double show *Rep Season* performing simultaneously in *Wayside Bride* and *Light Shining* in Buckinghamshire, co-directed by Eamon Flack and Hannah Goodwin. Most recently he performed in Malthouse Theatre's *Macbeth (An Undoing)* directed by Matthew Lutton.

Michala Banas **Wife**

Michala Banas is a multi-award-winning film, television and theatre actor. With a remarkable career spanning over four decades, Michala has starred in over 90 films, television and theatre productions.

Honoured to be playing *Wife* in *Love Stories*, some of Michala's previous theatre credits include, *The Memory of Water* for Ensemble Theatre; *Boy Swallows Universe* for Queensland Theatre; *The Odd Couple*, *The Truth* and *Birdland* for Melbourne Theatre Company; the Green Room award nominated *Beauty Queen of Leenane* for the KIN Collective; *Funny Girl* for Sydney Symphony Orchestra and *Avenue Q* for Arts Asia Pacific, for which she won a Helpmann award for best

actress.

Michala has long been a fixture on Australian television, starring in shows like *Always Greener*, *McLeod's Daughters*, *Winners and Losers*, *Beaconsfield*, *Halifax Retribution*, *Nowhere Boys*, *Upper Middle Bogan*, *Bad Mothers*, *Gold Diggers* and most recently *A Remarkable Place to Die*, to name a few. Michala has also made her mark in film with roles in *That's Not My Dog*, *Ned*, *Scooby-Doo*, and *Nowhere Boys: The Book of Shadows*. In 2024, she will appear in the upcoming Amazon Prime feature *Road To The Sky*.

A proud member of MEAA, Michala is also an Intimacy Coordinator for stage and screen, Writer, Founding member and Co-Artistic Director of Green Room nominated theatre company, The KIN Collective, and Associate Producer on the groundbreaking documentary *The Show Must Go On*. In 2022, Michala made her directorial debut, and recently completed a short film which she wrote, co-directed and starred in alongside one of the people she most admires in the world – her father.

Bryan Proberts Ensemble

Queensland Theatre: *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Holidays*, *Hydra*, *Twelfth Night*, *The 39 Steps*, *600 Ways to filter a Sunset*, *St Mary's in Exile*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Odd Couple*, *Australia Day*, *Design For Living*, *Pygmalion*, *Waiting for Godot*, *The Alchemist* (with Bell Shakespeare Company), *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Private Fears in Public Places*, *A Christmas Carol*, *The Venetian Twins*, *Scapin*, *The Lonesome West*, *Mano Nera*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Road to She-Devil's Salon*. *Shake & Stir: A Christmas Carol*, *George's Marvellous Medicine*, *Tequila Mockingbird*, 1984, *Animal Farm*; *La Boite Theatre: Away*, *Caesar*, *Edward Gant's Amazing Feats of Loneliness* (with Sydney Theatre Company), *As You Like It*, *The Wishing Well*, *The Danger Age*, *The Year Nick McGowan Came to Stay*, *Operator*, *Creche and Burn*, *Way Out West*, *Milo's Wake*; Brisbane Festival: *Love Stories*; *Opera Queensland: Ruddigore*, *Kiss Me*, *Kate*, *Candide*; Queensland Music Festival: *Credo the Innocence of God*; Hot House Theatre Company: *Australia: The Show*.

Film: *Furiosa*, *Charlie*, *Bloody Hell*, *Sweet River*, *In Like Flynn*, *Celeste*, *Don't Tell*, *Pirates of the Caribbean 5 - Dead Men Tell No Tales*, *The Railway Man*, *Tracks*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Singularity*, *Punishment*, *Daybreakers*, *Subdivision*, *Triangle*, *Hildegard*, *The Proposition*, *Nim's Island*, *A Heartbeat Away* and *The Horseman*.

Television: *Boy Swallows Universe*, *In Our Blood*, *Nautilus*, *Troppo*, *Young Rock*, *Joe versus Carol*, *Tidelands*, *Monarch Cove*, *Starter Wife*, *Fat Cow Motel*, *Pyjama Girl*, *Love Weights*.

Awards: Gold Matilda Award for *Body of Work* (2012) and Matilda Award for Best Supporting Actor – *As You Like It* (2012). Matilda Commendation for *The Lonesome West*, *Road to the She-Devil's Salon* (2004). Training: USQ

Patrick Jhanur Ensemble

Patrick Jhanur is an accomplished Australian actor with work spanning both screen and stage. In theatre, Patrick's credits include *Single Asian Female* (Belvoir), *Terrestrial* (State Theatre Company of South Australia), *Leviathan* (Griffin), *Banging Denmark* (Sydney Theatre Company), *Taming of the Shrew*, *Vietgone* (Queensland Theatre), *An Ideal Husband* (La Boite), *Australian Open* (KXT) and was most recently seen in *Hot Tub* (Belvoir 25A).

Patrick's select television credits include *Riot*, *Diary of an Uber Driver*, *Troppo* (ABC), *Darby and Joan* (Acorn) and *Latecomers* (SBS).

Feature film credits include the Helen Reddy biopic *I Am Woman* with Evan Peters and Tilda Cobham-Hervey.

Jacob Watton Ensemble

Jacob Watton, is a performer and creator from Meanjin Brisbane. He graduated with first-class honors in dance performance from QUT in 2017.

Jacob's work has been presented in QLD, nationally, and internationally. Highlights include presenting at Ars Electronica Festival in Austria, the Busan International Dance Festival in South Korea, Adelaide Fringe, Perth Fringe World, as well as presenting at the Woodford Folk Festival, Curious Arts Festival, and HOTA's Underground Festival. Most recently Jacob has been creating a new children's show for primary school aged young people called *The Great Beach Adventure* which premiered at the Backbone Youth Arts Awaken Festival in 2023 and tours to the North Australian Festival of Art in Townsville in 2024.

As well as creating his own work Jacob is a sought-after collaborator and performer working with companies and directors. In this capacity Jacob has toured works all over the world from the Shanghai Dance Festival to local communities in Central Queensland. Jacob has had the joy of working with Phluxus2 Dance Collective, RAVA Productions, Angela Chaplin, and LJ Projects to name a few. Jacob is currently in development with Nerida Matthaei on her latest work with Phluxus2 titled *The Next 14 Seconds* set to premiere at QPAC in November.

Hsin-Ju Ely Ensemble

Born in Taiwan, then moving to Brisbane to study at QUT, Hsin-Ju has become one of Brisbane's most sought-after dancers and physical performers. In her early career Hsin-Ju joined Dancenorth from 2006-2009 under the direction of Gavin Webber and worked with guest choreographers such as Antony Hamilton, Ross McCormack and Sarah Jayne Howard. Then working as an independent artist, working on projects including Stalker Theatre Company's large-scale production *Shanghai Lady Killer*, Gavin Webber's *Rock Show* in collaboration with Australian rock band Regurgitator, Lisa Wilson Projects' *Lake and Bunker* (2022), The Farm's *The Last Blast* and *The Ninth Wave*, Seeing Place Productions *Time Capsule*, Victoria Chiu's *Do You Speak Chinese* for Shanghai Festival and Branch Nebula's *Snake Sessions*. Hsin-Ju is a current senior member of Phluxus2 Dance Collective led by Nerida Matthaei and has performed/toured *Angel Monster* internationally and nationally including Edinburgh Fringe in 2022 and 2023; and as featured performer in *The Woman Remembers* in collaboration with Belloo Creative. In 2021, Hsin-Ju extended her art interests into stage plays, acting and opera. She performed in Trent Dalton's bestselling novel *Boy Swallows Universe* adapted for stage by Tim McGarry and Shock Therapy Arts' *Locked In*, *The Poison of Polygamy* (2023) by La Boite Theatre and *The Ring Cycle* (2023) by Opera Australia, *Sand* (2024) by Belloo Creative.

Kirk Page Ensemble

Kirk is a proud Munanjali man with ancestral connections to Badu Island in the Torres Strait, Germany and Wales. He trained with the National Aboriginal and Islander Skills Development Association (NAISDA) and began his professional career with Bangarra in 1995.

As an actor Kirk has worked with Bangarra: *Wudjang: Not The Past*. Performing Lines: *Sunshine Super Girl*. Sydney Theatre Company: *The Harp in the South*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Sunshine Club*. Belvoir Street Theatre: *Conversations with the Dead*, *The Dreamers*. Griffin Theatre Company: *Silent Disco*. Bell Shakespeare: *My Girranjundji*. Merrigong Theatre Company: *Death in Bowengabbie*. Malthouse Theatre: *One Night the Moon*. Queensland Theatre: *Black Diggers*. Black Swan State Theatre Company: *Corrugation Road*. Ilbjerri Theatre Company: *Coranderrk*. Melbourne International Arts Festival: *My Lovers' Bones*. Back Row Productions: *Priscilla Queen of the Desert The Musical*. CDP Theatre: *Snugglepot & Cuddlepie*. HotHouse Theatre: *Australia the Show!* KooembaJdarra Indigenous Performing Arts: *Binny's Backyard*, *Going to the Island*. Legs on the Wall: *4 on the Floor*, *Runners Up*, *EORA Crossing* and *On the Case*.

Kirk appeared in *Redfern Now's* second series receiving a Logie award nomination for Most Outstanding Actor. Kirk also appeared in *Mystery Road's* second series.

Kirk works across performance disciplines as a dancer, actor, singer, teacher and writer. Most recently he choreographed *Swim* for Griffin Theatre Company and directed *My Cousin Frank* for NORPA.

Based on Bundjalung country in Northern NSW Kirk is a part of the editing team at the Koori Mail newspaper.

Angie Milliken Ensemble

Angie Milliken is a multi-award winning actress with an acclaimed career spanning theatre, film, and television.

She has performed leading roles with Australia's major theatre companies and directors, including for Sydney Theatre Company: *The Real Thing*, *Three Days of Rain*, *Closer*, *Betrayal*, *The White Devil*, *A Month in the Country*, *The Herbal Bed* and *Much Ado about Nothing*. Queensland Theatre: *Bernhardt/Hamlet*, *Death of a Salesman*, *The Effect*, and For Belvoir: *My Zinc Bed*, *Master Builder*, *Dead Heart* and *The Tempest* and for State Theatre Company of South Australia: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *'Tis a Pity She's a Whore*. For the Malthouse: *Redemption* and for Bell Shakespeare: *Romeo & Juliet*. Internationally, she appeared in *The White Devil* at New York's Brooklyn Academy of Music. In 2024 she performed in the highly praised production of *Grimm* for Shake & Stir and Brisbane Festival.

Angie's film credits include *Elvis*, *Spiderhead*, *Jungle*, *Rippy*, *Take My hand*, *This isn't Funny*, *SOLO*, *Dead Heart*, *Paperback Hero*, *Rough Diamonds*, *Harbour Beat*, *Eight Ball*, and the award winning short film *A thousand Odd Days*. Her television performances range from *CSI: Miami*, *Rake*, *Darby and Joan*, *Joe vs Carole*, *Tropo* and *Young Rock to Farscape*, *Beastmaster*, *Lost World*, *Beast*, *The Feds* and *The Paperman*.

Awards and Training: Angie has received two AACTA Awards for Best Actress in the Mini-Series *My Brother Jack* and MDA, and was AACTA and Logie nominated for her performances in the mini-series *Through My Eyes* and *The Sharknet*. She has also received a Matilda Award nomination (Bernhardt/Hamlet) and a Centenary Medal for Services to Film. She trained at NIDA and UQ (BA) and has served two terms on the Sydney Theatre Company Board.

Later in 2025, Angie will tour nationally with Musica Viva alongside the Takács Quartet. She is a proud member of MEAA.

Tnee Dyer Camera Operator

Antony (Tnee) Dyer is a creative powerhouse who seamlessly blends his passion for music with his expertise in video production. As the founder of Raw Mint, a Brisbane-based video company, Tnee helps artists and organisations in the performing arts tell their stories through captivating visuals. Tnee's musical journey began as a professional musician, pianist, and composer. He has toured both nationally and internationally, performing at prestigious events like the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. This experience instilled in him a deep understanding of the artistic process, allowing him to translate the essence of performance into video. Fueled by a desire to explore new avenues, Tnee honed his filmmaking skills, earning a Bachelor's degree in Screen Production. This shift wasn't a departure, but rather an evolution. He now uses his 'musical approach' to video creation, crafting compelling narratives that resonate with viewers. Tnee's client list includes Opera Queensland, Circa Contemporary Circus, and the Queensland Youth Orchestras. His work has been recognised with grants from Arts Queensland and Country Arts Australia, showcasing his commitment to artistic excellence. Beyond Raw Mint, Tnee's dedication to fostering creativity extends to guest

lecturing and teaching. He inspires the next generation by sharing his knowledge of music theory and video production, ensuring a vibrant future for the performing arts. Tnee Dyer is a testament to the power of bridging artistic disciplines. He not only captures performances, he translates their essence, creating a lasting impact on audiences.